

COUNTY: DEVON      SITE NAME: WESTERN KING

DISTRICT: PLYMOUTH

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended

Local Planning Authority: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL, Plymouth City Council

National Grid Reference: SX 462533      Area: 1.9 (ha.) 4.7 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 201      1:10,000: SX 45 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –      Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

A new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This section of cliff exposes a complex series of Devonian limestones, of late Frasnian to early Fammenian age, which comprise the youngest limestones of the Plymouth Limestone Group. They contain an important fauna of microfossils, known as conodonts, which are used to subdivide the rock sequence and relate it to comparable sequences elsewhere. Of particular interest is the occurrence of laminated sediment which infills solutional cavities within the Frasnian limestones, and which is thought to have been deposited very soon after the limestones themselves were laid down. The exact process of formation of the infill is not yet fully understood and the site is therefore of importance for further research into this. Western King is also of considerable historical interest since some of the earliest studies on British fossil corals of Devonian age were carried out here.

The site also includes an area of amenity grassland and scrub within which colonies of the nationally rare plant Field Eryngo *Eryngium campestre* occur. This plant is afforded special protection by its inclusion on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, which stipulates that it is an offence if the plant is picked, uprooted or destroyed.